

I'm Talking, But They're Not Listening

Communication Skills

Nonverbal Considerations

- Expectations tend to be cultural
- Attitudes & body language convey more than words
 - Eyes
 - Convey power
 - Eye contact depends on culture, shyness, etc.
 - Face: Smiling or frowning
 - Movement
 - Hard for child to stay still when listening or talking
 - Hand/foot moving may *not* mean lack of attention
 - Personal space
 - Get to child's level
 - Child may like gentle touch on back or head

Verbal Considerations

- Timing
 - Slow or fast talking
 - Pauses or not
 - Interruptions
 - One person at a time or many at once
- Volume
- Tone

Types of Communication

<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Receptive Language: Listening<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Active listening and reflecting back	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Expressive Language: Talking<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Positive speech and I-statements
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Receptive Language

Active Listening

- Encourage & validate feelings
 - All feelings are valid
 - Acknowledging feelings isn't condoning behavior
- Give nonverbal affirmations
- Give verbal affirmation
- Empathize: put yourself in child's place
- Restate: *feelings, desires, issues*
- Avoid: - blame - interruptions - advice - solutions

Soft Phrases

- *I wonder why . . .*
- *Help me understand*
- *Tell me more about . . .*

Listening with Your Eyes

- Discover favorite activities
- Find child's strengths
- Pattern when child *is not* listening:
 - When?
 - Who is around?
 - Other information?

Reflecting Back

Active listen

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Reflect back child's feelings

Child	Nonreflecting Adult	Reflecting Adult
<i>"I hate you!"</i>	<i>"Don't talk to me that way!"</i>	<i>"You sound angry!"</i>
<i>"I won't! You can't make me!"</i>	<i>"Don't get sassy with me!"</i>	<i>"You sound angry. I wonder what you want."</i>
<i>"I can't do it!"</i>	<i>"Of course you can. You need to try harder."</i>	<i>"This seems hard for you."</i>
<i>"That's not fair!"</i>	<i>"Life is not fair. Or Of course, it 's fair."</i>	<i>"That wasn't what you wanted to do. I wonder what you want to do."</i>

Expressive Language

Tone and Volume

- Calm or anxious
- Reassuring or blaming
- Loud or soft
- Encouraging or frightening

Techniques for Clear, Simple Messages

- Avoid “No” and “Don’t.” Tell child what to do, not what *not* to do
- Ask a question only if you are willing to accept *any* answer
- Describe what you see: *I see toys scattered all over the room.*
- Give simple reasons: *Brushing teeth prevents cavities.*
- Offer choices:
 - Two acceptable choices: *Do you want to pick up blocks or puzzles?”*
 - When _____, then _____ choices: *When you put on your shoes, then you can go outside”*
 - Either _____, or _____ choices: *It’s too noisy. Either play more quietly or play outside.*
- (consequences of actions)
- Give preparation ahead: *In five minutes, it will be clean-up time.*
- Keep reminders short: If child forgets to wash hands: *Hands*
- Special tips:
 - Use humor: laugh with, not at child
 - Use fantasy or make a game
 - Write a note or draw a picture
- Describe what you feel with *I-statements*.

I-statements

Simple I-statements

I feel _____, when _____, because _____.
(feeling) (behavior) (reason)

"I feel anxious when you throw the ball inside, because I'm afraid something will break."

Directive I-statements

When _____, I feel _____, because _____, and I want you to _____.
(behavior) (feeling) (reason) (changed behavior)

"When the television is so loud, I cannot concentrate on my reading. I want you to turn it down."

Problem-solving I-statement

I feel _____, when _____, because _____. How, where else could you. . .?
Show me another way to . . .?
What are other choices?
Let's find a win-win solution.

When you yell at me when I am talking to (my friend), I feel irritated.

- *What are some choices for you while you are waiting?*
- *How else could you let me know you need my attention?*
 - * *What could you do instead of yelling at me?*
 - * *Let's find a win-win solution for this problem.*

Praise versus Encouragement

Short term goal: Help child feel good about immediate efforts.

Long term goal: Help child to praise self for accomplishments and not have to depend on others for positive strokes.

Praise

- Is judgmental and empty
- Focuses on product (or being) not process
- Is irrelevant to present effort
- Is vague and gives no specific information

You're a good boy!

You're a nice little girl!

This is a great paper!

What a champion!

Encouragement

- Is nonjudgmental and meaningful
- Focuses on doing
- Recognizes effort
- Gives specific information
 - what you see
 - how you feel

Opening the door for me was very helpful. Thank you.

I like it when you sit next to me.

You used lots of red color in your picture.

You did a lot of research for this report. How interesting that his real name was Samuel Clemens.

You have mastered riding that skate board

Recommended Resources

Books

Dinkmeyer and McKay. *The Parent's Handbook, STEP*: American Guidance Service, 1982.

Mazlish and Faber. *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*. Avon Books, 1980.

Shure. *Raising A Thinking Child* (also a workbook). Pocketbooks, 2005.

Books for Children

Crary. Feelings for Little Children, (color board books): *When You're Mad, Happy, Silly, Shy*. Parenting Press.
www.parentingpress.com

-----, Dealing with Feelings Series: *I'm Furious, Scared, Excited, Mad, Frustrated, Proud*. Parenting Press.
www.parentingpress.com

Preston. *The Temper Tantrum Book*. Scholastic. 1969.

Books by Sue Dinwiddie

I Want It! Problem-Solving Techniques with Children Two to Eight. Better World Press.. www.daise.com

-----, *Let Me Think! Activities to Develop Problem-Solving Abilities in Young Children*. Better World Press.
www.daise.com